



SLO Public Health Laboratory Bulletin

**June
2010**

Resurgence of pertussis, California 2010

The SLO Public Health Laboratory has tested over 260 specimens with 60 positives (25% positivity rate) since the beginning of this most recent outbreak, and is continuing to run the Bordetella PCR test daily. Three cases of Bordetella parapertussis infection – NOT a reportable communicable disease—have also been detected with use of the PCR assay. Numerous California counties are also reporting increased numbers of pertussis cases

Nasopharyngeal wash and swab specimens are being accepted for ***Bordetella pertussis*** PCR testing. PCR is superior to culture for detection of the agent of whooping cough. Culture has a reported sensitivity of 45-60% in most published studies whereas PCR is reported 90-95% sensitive. The assay used by the SLO Public Health Laboratory will also detect ***B. parapertussis***. Fee is \$92.00 through June 30, 2010, all insurances can be billed by the SLO Public Health Laboratory.

M-4 and saline—containing specimen tubes for PCR testing

Please be **certain the tube cap is tight** and the specimen is double-bagged with the requisition in the exterior plastic pocket. Leaking specimens may be rejected!

Workshop: Identification of Medically Important Filamentous Fungi

September 8-9, 2010 - San Luis Obispo, CA, Cal Poly

Sponsored by National Laboratory Training Network & San Luis Obispo County Public Health Laboratory

Faculty: Jim Harris, Ph.D.

Dr. Harris was the Training Coordinator for the Texas Department of State Health Services from 1984 to 2008. He was also a clinical instructor in Medical Technology for the School of Health Professions, Texas State University in San Marcos, TX and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. For additional program content information, please contact Amanda Larkin by email at amanda.larkin@aphl.org.

Registration Fee: \$395.00 (payable to APHL)

Registration Deadline: August 24, 2010

Register online at www.nlttn.org/129-10.htm

If you have difficulty with the online registration process, please email registrar@aphl.org or call 240.485.2727. Upon receipt of your registration, a confirmation letter will be sent by email – if you do not receive a confirmation email, contact the registrar.

What else does a public health laboratory do besides flu testing? Domoic Acid,

Concerns have arisen regarding the seasonal occurrence of marine toxins that may be concentrated in shellfish. This month the SLO Public Health laboratory began testing of selected shellfish harvests for the amnesiac shellfish toxin called domoic acid. Domoic acid acts as a neurotoxin, causing short-term memory loss, brain damage and death in severe cases. Victims may exhibit symptoms such as headache, dizziness, disorientation, vision disturbances, loss of short-term memory, motor weakness, seizures, profuse respiratory secretions, hiccoughs, unstable blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmia, and coma.

The marine diatoms that produce domoic acid do NOT signal their presence by producing a “red tide”, but act like a stealth agent, producing the substance without discoloration of marine waters. The only way to ensure that shellfish meat do not contain domoic acid is to test the harvested shellfish meat for the toxin.

2010-2011 Laboratory testing fees. New fees effective July 1, 2010 accompany this bulletin.